

PERFORMANCE REPORT

A. Project Identifiers

- 1) Award Number: NA16FX1470
- 2) Grant Program/CFDA#: SSLRI 2001-30
- 3) Name of Recipient Organization: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence
- 4) Principal Investigator: James A. Fall
- 5) Project Title: The Subsistence Harvests of Sea Lions and Harbors Seals by Alaska Natives
- 6) Funding: Federal: \$ 250,000 Match: \$ 0
- 7) Award Period: From: 1 September 2001 To: 31 August 2002
- 8) Period Covered by this Report: From: 1 September 2001 To: 28 February 2002

B. Project Summary

The goal of the project is to document the annual subsistence takes of sea lions and harbor seals by Alaska Natives in 64 communities listed in Table 1, for the calendar year 2001. The project is being conducted by the Division of Subsistence of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) in partnership with the Alaska Native Harbor Seal Commission (ANHSC) and the Aleut Marine Mammal Commission (AMMC). The project will provide coverage for the 9th year of a harvest assessment program for sea lions and harbor seals first started in 1992. The project goal is to estimate the total annual direct subsistence takes of sea lions and harbor seals by geographic area. Information collected is consistent with previous survey years, including harvest, struck and lost, total take, month of take, sex of animals, age class of animals, number of hunters, and harvest success rates. Harvest trends since 1992 will be presented by stock, geographic region, and community. Harvest information is being collected through post-season, retrospective recall surveys of hunters and users in about 1,650 households. Local researchers hired in each community are conducting the interviews, supervised within a regional research structure. Quantitative information will be statistically analyzed and presented in a published annual report and an updated computer-accessible database.

The project also proposes a staged transition of the organization of the harvest assessment program over a three-year period among partners. Certain research and oversight responsibilities for the annual harvest assessment will be transferred between ADF&G and ANHSC, and other potential partners such as the AMMC and the Alaska Sea Otter and Sea Lion Commission (TASSC). After the three-year transition, ANHSC and other partners will assume responsibilities for particular functions, such as selecting, hiring, and supervising local researchers who conduct surveys, while ADF&G will perform statistical and other functions. Consultation between ADF&G, ANHSC, AMMC and TASSC is an objective for the current project in order to develop joint relationships on the proposed project for years two and three.

Table 1. Status of Harbor Seal/Sea Lion Interviews, 2001 Harvest Year, as of 2/28/02

Community	Status	Community	Status
Southeast Alaska		North Bristol Bay	
Angoon	Completed	Aleknagik	Underway
Craig	Completed	Clarks Point	Completed
Haines	Completed	Dillingham	Underway
Hoonah	Underway	Manokotak	Underway
Hydaburg	Will not be surveyed this year	Togiak	Underway
Juneau	Completed	Twin Hills	Underway
Kake	Underway		
Ketchikan	Completed	South Bristol Bay	
Klawock	Completed	Egegik	Completed
Klukwan	Completed	King Salmon	Completed
Pelican	Completed	Levelock	Underway
Petersburg	Completed	Naknek	Completed
Saxman	Completed	Pilot Point	Completed
Sitka	Underway	Port Heiden	Completed
Wrangell	Completed	South Naknek	Completed
Yakutat	Completed		
Prince William Sound/Lower Cook Inlet (North Pacific Rim)		South Alaska Peninsula	
*Chenega Bay	Underway	Chignik	Underway
*Cordova/Eyak	Underway	Chignik Lagoon	Completed
*Nanwalek	Underway	Chignik Lake	Underway
*Port Graham	Completed	**False Pass	Underway
*Seldovia	Underway	Ivanof Bay	Underway
*Seward	Underway	**King Cove	Completed
*Tatitlek	Underway	**Nelson Lagoon	AMMC contacting
*Valdez	Underway	Perryville	Completed
		**Sand Point	Completed
Upper Kenai - Cook Inlet		Aleutian/Pribilof Islands	
Anchorage	Completed	**Adak	AMMC making contact
Homer	Completed	**Akutan	Completed
Kenai	Completed	**Atka	AMMC making contact
Tyonek	Underway	**Nikolski	Completed
Kodiak Island		St. George	Attempting to hire local assistant
		St. Paul	Conducting its own study: SSLRI Project 2001-24
Akhiok	Underway	**Unalaska	Attempting to hire local assistant
Karluk	Completed		
Kodiak City	Underway		
Larsen Bay	Completed		
Old Harbor	Completed		
Ouzinkie	Completed		
Port Lions	Completed		

* Local researchers hired by Alaska Native Harbor Seal Commission

** Local researchers hired with assistance of Aleut Marine Mammal Commission

C. Summary of Progress and Results

1) Tasks scheduled for reporting period by objective

Objective One: documentation of subsistence harvests of sea lions and harbor seals by Alaska Natives in 64 communities for 2001.

Tasks scheduled for the reporting period included contacting each community to notify them of our intent to conduct another round of interviews in early 2002, hiring and training local research assistants, and beginning household interviews. Another objective was to develop a cooperative agreement (contract) with the ANHSC to support its involvement in the project.

Objective Two: Dissemination of Subsistence Information to Agencies, Participating Subsistence Communities, and Hunter Organizations

Tasks under this objective for this reporting period included making available the findings from previous rounds of research and communicating the goals of the present project at workshops and other meetings.

Objective Three: Transfer of Research and Oversight Functions Between Partner Organizations.

Tasks for this reporting period for this objective included training ANHSC staff in aspects of the harvest assessment program and exploring potential joint relations between organizations such as ANHSC, TASSC, and AMMC.

2) Activities undertaken to meet objectives

Objective One

Principal Investigator James Fall and regional supervisor Mike Turek attended a meeting of the ANHSC in Girdwood on September 28 – 30, 2001. They presented overviews of the findings from the 2000 study and the goals and objectives of the current project. TASSC executive director Lianna Jack attended a portion of this meeting, during which TASSC's potential involvement was discussed but no decision made. The ANHSC approved the cooperative agreement and became a formal partner in the study.

Project personnel began contacting communities and former local research assistants in December 2001. A letter, jointly signed by principal investigator James Fall and ANHSC chair Harold Martin, was sent to study community governments in late December 2001. (All interviewed households also received a copy of the letter from the local research assistants.) Non-permanent Fish and Wildlife Technician II positions were established, effective January 7, 2002.

The original research design listed 62 communities, but two more were added: Adak and Nelson Lagoon. Adak is a former US Navy base that now has a civilian population including Aleut

residents who hunt marine mammals. Nelson Lagoon households were interviewed for 1992 only, when no hunting activity was documented. On the advice of the AMMC, we will try to update data for this community for 2001.

Table 1 summarizes the status of the interviewing as of approximately February 28, 2002. Of the 64 study communities, interviewing had been completed in 34. Interviewing was underway, and for the most part nearly complete, in 23 other communities. There were 5 communities, all in the lower Alaska Peninsula and Aleutians area, where local assistants still needed to be hired. We have been holding off on hiring local assistants pending contacts and recommendations from the AMMC. Additionally, the community of St. Paul has received funding directly from NMFS (Project SSLRI 2001-24) to do its own harvest assessment work. We are attempting to arrange to receive these data. One community will not be surveyed, Hydaburg, because a local assistant could not be hired.

Project coordinator Ron Stanek, James Fall, and Molly Chythlook attended portions of the TASSC meeting on October 24, 2002 in Anchorage, during which an overview of the project was presented and some discussion of TASSC's potential involvement took place.

A joint meeting of the TASSC, ANHSC, ADF&G Division of Subsistence project staff (and division director Mary Pete), and staff of the AMMC took place during the evening of October 24 at the Captain Cook Hotel in Anchorage. Ways to include the commissions in future research were discussed. A subcommittee of TASSC, AMMC, and ANHSC members was set up to follow through on issues, but did not meet during the reporting period. A meeting was scheduled for March 15, 2002.

Consultations with AMMC executive director Peggy Osterback took place after the meeting at the Captain Cook Hotel, beginning October 25, 2001. A draft cooperative agreement was prepared, and approved by the AMMC in February 2002. The agreement describes how ADF&G and the AMMC will work together to accomplish the harvest data collection in the nine communities that are members of the AMMC. Waiting for AMMC action on the agreement delayed slightly the contacting of community governments and local research assistants.

In January 2002, the ANHSC hired Una Swain as its project coordinator. The ANHSC is responsible for hiring local research assistants in the North Pacific Rim communities. Ron Stanek traveled with Swain to Nanwalek and Port Graham in February to orient her to the project and work with local assistants and hunters. They also traveled to Cordova in February to meet with the Eyak Tribal Council about the project.

In February, Subsistence Resource Specialist (SRS) Liz Williams traveled to Ouzinkie, Port Lions, and Old Harbor in the Kodiak Island Borough. She worked with the experienced local researcher in Ouzinkie, and trained new local researchers in the other two communities.

In Anchorage, SRS Davin Holen contacted hunters primarily by phone. He was also responsible for interviewing hunters in Kenai and Homer. Because of the difficulty in finding a local research assistant for these locations in the past, it was decided that Division of Subsistence staff would collect the data directly this year.

In Juneau, SRS Nathan Soboleff has been responsible for contacting hunters. He reports success in adding to the hunter list for that community.

Other project staff who have been hiring local assistants, training new hires, and contacting hunters as necessary include Molly Chythlook, Lisa Scarbrough, Mike Turek, Amy Paige, and Matt Kookesh.

Objective Two

Project staff prepared a four-page overview of the 2000 study findings. This was sent to all community governments and was also given to households when they were interviewed. Also, specific findings summaries for most communities were also prepared and distributed as the surveys were conducted.

Findings from previous rounds of research were also reviewed at a meeting of the ANHSC in September 2001.

Objective Three

Most activity on this objective has been described under the previous two objectives, above. Training of ANHSC staff has taken place. Consultations with the ANHSC, the AMMC, and TASSC have occurred. Negotiations are underway with the ANHSC to fund the second year of the study through a congressional appropriation that the ANHSC received.

3) Changes to goals/objectives

No major changes to goals and objectives have taken place during this reporting period. As noted above, a no-cost cooperative agreement was developed with the Aleut Marine Mammal Commission to secure the AMMC's assistance in setting up the project in lower Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands communities. Two communities (Adak and Nelson Lagoon) were added to the study community list. The community of St. Paul is conducting its own program with the assistance of a contractor (LGL Alaska Research Associates), and we intend to obtain harvest estimates through that project.

4) Results/products

No products were scheduled for completion during this reporting period.

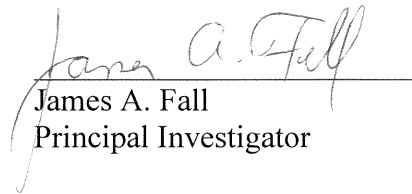
D. Problems

No significant problems have been encountered to date to prevent or substantially delay completion of any scheduled tasks. Surveys in most study communities have been completed or are almost finished. As noted above, surveys will not be completed in at least one community (Hydaburg), and it is possible, as in past rounds of research, that surveys will not be completed in a few other communities in which difficulties in hiring local assistants might occur. In these few

cases, estimates of takes from 2000 will be used. This has been the procedure used in the past rounds of research.

There have no special problems or differences between budgeted and actual expenses.

Prepared by:


James A. Fall
Principal Investigator

Date: March 20, 2002